What is claimed is:

1. An apparatus for at least partially controlling operation of at least one machine comprising:

means for sensing a predetermined proximity of at least one chip associated with at least one individual with respect to each machine to be monitored; and

means for disengaging each corresponding machine in response to proximity being sensed by the sensing means.

2. The apparatus of claim 1 further comprising:

means for restarting each machine after the particular machine has been disengaged if the at least one chip associated with the at least one individual is no longer within the predetermined proximity with respect to the particular machine.

3. The apparatus of claim 1 further comprising:

means for communicating a disengagement of a particular machine to a location remote with respect to the particular machine.

4. The apparatus of claim 1 further comprising:

means for collecting information with respect to a frequency of disengagements of each machine.

5. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the sensing means further comprises:

at least one sensor operably associated with respect to each machine to be at least partially controlled for sensing a predetermined proximity of the at least one chip with respect to the at least one sensor, the at least one sensor operable to emit a chip-present output signal corresponding to the sensed predetermined proximity of at least one chip.

6. The apparatus of claim 5 wherein the at least one chip emits a chip-present signal receivable by the at least one sensor, the signal emitted over a distance substantially equal to the predetermined proximity.

7. The apparatus of claim 6 wherein each of at least one chips is operable to emit an encoded unique identification signal.

8. The apparatus of claim 5 wherein the at least one chip is incorporated in one of a badge, a hat and an article of clothing.

9. The apparatus of claim 5 wherein the at least one sensor emits a chip-detection signal over a distance substantially equal to the predetermined proximity.

10. The apparatus of claim 5 wherein the at least one sensor is operable to detect and distinguish between a plurality of different unique identification codes associated with different chips.

11. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the disengaging means further comprises:

a central processing unit for receiving a chip-present output signal from the sensing means and for controlling a predetermined function of an associated machine in response to the chip-present signal.

12. The apparatus of to claim 11 wherein the disengaging means further comprises:

a microprocessor operating in accordance with a program stored in memory.

13. An apparatus for controlling operation of at least one machine comprising:

at least one chip associated with respect to an individual; and

at least one sensor associated with respect to a particular one of the at least one machine for sensing a predetermined proximity of the at least one chip with respect to the at least one sensor; and

a switch operably associated with the at least one sensor and the particular one machine for controlling operation of the particular one machine in response to the at least one sensor.

14. The apparatus of claim 13 wherein the at least one chip actively emits a chip-present signal receivable by the at least one sensor over a distance substantially equal to the predetermined proximity.

15. The apparatus of claim 13 wherein the at least one sensor actively emits a chip detection signal over a distance substantially equal to the predetermined proximity.

16. A method for controlling operation of at least one machine comprising the steps of:

sensing a predetermined proximity of at least one chip associated with at least one individual with respect to each machine to be controlled with sensing means; and

disengaging each corresponding machine in response to proximity being sensed by the sensing means.

17. The method of claim 16 further comprising the step of step of:

restarting each machine after a particular machine has been disengaged if the at least one chip associated with the at least one individual is no longer within the predetermined proximity with respect to the particular machine.

18. The method of claim 17 further comprising the step of:

actively emitting a chip-present signal continuously in response to predetermined proximity of at least one chip associated with each individual with respect to the machine, wherein the restarting step operates to restart the machine in response to discontinuation of all chip-present signals within the predetermined proximity.

19. The method of claim 17 wherein the sensing step further comprises the step of:

passively emitting a chip-present signal as a pulse in response to an active query signal from the sensing means, wherein the restarting step operates to restart the machine in response to operator input.

20. The method of claim 16 further comprising the step of:

communicating a disengagement of the machine to a location remote with respect to the machine.

21. The method of claim 20 wherein the communicating step further comprises the step of:

signaling the disengagement of the machine to a control room in a manufacturing facility.

22. The method of claim 16 further comprising the step of:

collecting information with respect to a frequency of disengagements of the machine.

23. The method of claim 22 wherein the communicating step further comprises the step of:

recording data associated with disengagements of the machine in a data storage device.

24. The method of claim 16 wherein the sensing step further comprises the step of:

associating at least one chip with respect to each individual; and

associating at least one sensor with respect to each machine to be monitored for sensing a predetermined proximity of the at least one chip with respect to the at least one sensor.

25. The method of claim 24 further comprising the step of:

actively emitting a chip-present signal receivable by the at least one sensor from at least one chip over a distance substantially equal to the predetermined proximity.

26. The method of claim 24 further comprising the step of:

actively emitting a chip detection signal over a second distance substantially equal to the predetermined proximity from at least one sensor, any chip of the at least one chip within the second distance actively responding with a chip-present signal detectable by the at least one sensor.